

almost entirely of the intelligentsia. The peasants no longer had much to say about the employment of teachers, or what or how they taught. They and their children accepted what the national government, through its local representatives, provided for them. They took it or left it, but mostly took it.

The national government, along with its other activities, maintained a close connection with the national church. Before the liberation of Bulgaria, the practice arose of having three or five members act as a church board in each village. Even if there happened to be no church building, this group was elected to see about the construction of one. Such a board followed the familistic practice of expecting elders to manage local affairs. After the growth of the national state the board was continued, but subjected to outside control. In Dragalevtsy it consisted of five people: the priest (who was the president), a treasurer, and three other village men who acted as a control committee to audit the work of the old board which they succeeded at the end of its two-year term. In the past the biennial election was held on a Sunday morning immediately after church. But the government took care to see that only those men who had the right to vote *politically* were eligible to elect the church board from a list of candidates prepared by the priest. As the priest prepared his slate with the help of the older people in the village, his choices usually met with the approval of the majority of men.

A candidate had to be an Orthodox Christian by baptism, should never have been in a lawsuit, should not be a drunkard, thief, and the like, nor an atheist opposed to the church. The elections had to be approved by the Sofia Metropolitan, or the high church court, thus removing the authority still further from the village. An office of an elective nature such as this carried a great deal of honor with it. The duties of the office were not burdensome because the church possessed no lands to be administered. Traditionally the church board was supposed to aid in enforcement of Sabbath observance, but members were not particularly zealous in carrying out this obligation. The priest had been having trouble of late with one board member who had become such a tippler that the board's prestige was suffering. If some question needed to be decided, as was the case about five or six times

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659 a year, the priest asked the board members to assemble at the church,
 794 minutes were kept, and no outsiders attended. The government's influence was further felt during the period 1934-1937, when all political elections were suspended, and with these all church board elections too. No one was eligible to vote.

659 As the national school and church authorities had not been satisfied
 869 with the type of religious training that the children had been getting
 771 in the average peasant home, they had set up in each village an organization called "The Association for the Orthodox Christianization of Bulgarian Youth." In general, the work of the group consisted in teaching the school children the significance of the iconostas, church ceremonies, and other related matters. School hours were used, and attendance was compulsory. The school director, who had been asked by the Archbishop in Sofia to conduct the work of the association in co-operation with the priest, said that they had had about twenty-five meetings during the year. Parents and others who were interested attended these meetings. This was one activity which the peasants had accepted quite willingly because, as one woman said, "the children are kept off the streets when there is a group gathering, and thus do not learn so many bad things." This was the woman's way of berating parents for failing to take better care of their children. But fundamentally the acceptance was based upon the traditional recognition of the church's importance. In the past, whatever had bolstered up the established church had bolstered up the familistic system.

178 Such a barrage from the batteries of commerce, government,
 181 and education² had left the familistic way of life in Dragalevtsy
 596 battered but not crumbling. The peasants were still amused at the intense activity of the intelligentsia; the few who were asked to confer with the authorities enjoyed reporting back to their families and friends just what they said and did. The people co-operated in the campaigns for this-and-that only when they knew that the mayor would send the policeman along if they did not co-operate. They attended lectures when ordered to do so, but they joined few of the organizations planned outside. Perhaps the best indication that this beehive of governmental activity was still on the surface was the failure of the peasants to seek advice from the intelligentsia who were supposedly there to help

² [For a detailed account, see category 116, pp. 161-176. Analyst]

to the cause of Bulgarian independence, and to the resurrection of the Bulgarian language as a medium of literary expression, gave the Church universally recognized prestige. After 1878, when national freedom was gained, the Orthodox Church was a State institution, and the members of its Hierarchy were public officials. A portion of the national budget was set aside to support the Church, which in addition owned considerable property largely derived from bequests. The case was comparable with that of a large state university in the United States. Salaries of professors in such a university are paid out of the state treasury; but it may own not inconsiderable wealth in its own right, is permitted to collect fees from students and to charge for other services rendered. When one considers the rural character of Bulgaria and the poverty of most of its 6,000,000-odd people, the financial strength of Orthodoxy reflected in such magnificent structures as the Archiepiscopal Palace in Sofia is genuinely impressive. Clergymen of all ranks officiated on public occasions; and, though the spirituality of the Bulgarian people may well have been far from deep, they prized the Church as the primary agency of the national culture. 795 648

Bulgarian education enjoyed a well merited reputation, and the theological schools established after 1878 ranked high among the country's institutions of higher learning. The training given consisted in the main of what we should call "general education," theology being taught as a field of specialization. The result was that many leading citizens were graduates of these schools. Religious instruction, normally by laymen, was likewise included in the curricula of elementary and secondary schools. About 4,000 churches served the people, under the direction of the Holy Synod. This body also fostered breadth of view, and held membership in the World Council of Churches prior to the war. On the whole, the religious situation 871 794

821/ was idyllic, in spite of a rather constant exchange of uncomplimentary remarks with the Greeks.

659 The first approach to the Church by the Communists was made rather gingerly and was not unfriendly. They seemed, indeed, to regard this venerable institution as a political instrument worth keeping in repair. True enough, religious instruction was banned from the public schools, and the control of marriage legislation was reserved to the State. Previously the Church not only had married aspirants to wedlock, but had maintained an elaborate system of marriage counseling and of divorce courts—courts with rules far more lenient than those recognized by either Catholic or conservative Protestant Churches in Western Europe. But the State budget continued to provide for the support of the clergy, and the prosecution of priests and prelates for alleged subversive activities was minimal.

[659] A drastic change took place when the Communist Party assumed complete control during December, 1947, following the return of Georgi Dimitrov from Russia. The Constitution signed on the fourth day of that month dealt with religion in the customary Soviet manner: guaranteeing freedom of conscience and religion, and specifically endorsing freedom of worship; on the other hand, decreeing separation of Church and State, and prohibiting political organizations based on religious belief and political activities by the Churches. During

671 February, 1949, statutes were decreed which outlined in detail the relationship of the Churches to the government. Control over ecclesiastical matters was lodged in the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, which could hold the recognized authorities of each Church responsible. All such authorities had to be Bulgarian citizens, and to register with the Ministry, which might insist upon the removal from office of any clergyman it deemed undesirable. These laws, which subjected the Church to the